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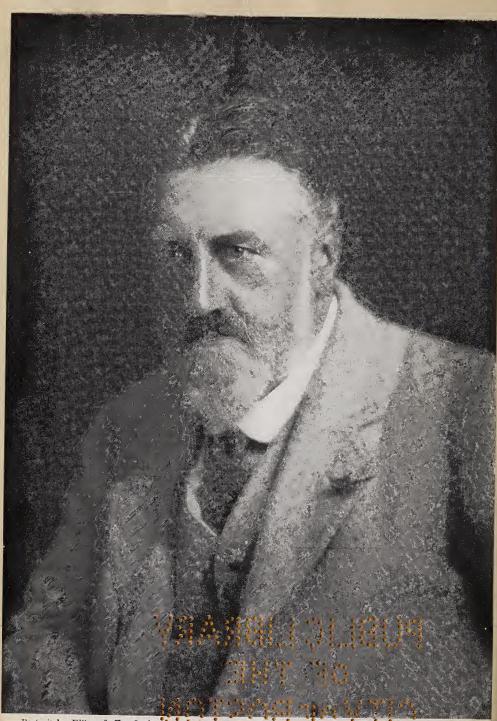
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GRANVILLE BANTOCK

GRANVILLE BANTOCK

RANVILLE BANTOCK was born in London on August 7th, 1868. He was educated with a view to an appointment in the Indian Civil Service, but his talent and love for the

art of music soon estranged him from that career. After a few lessons at the Trinity College, he entered the Royal Academy of Music in 1889, winning the Macfarren Scholarship on the completion of his first term there. During his student days, several works of his were performed at the Academy concerts, including a concert version of "Caedmar," an opera in one act, which was staged at the Olympic Theatre in 1892. But before his name was to become known as that of one of the most enterprising English composers of those days, a period of about three years (1893-1896) was devoted to activities in other domains of music. Bantock now edited "The New Quarterly Musical Review," and toured the country as conductor of musical comedies and light orchestral music, a task which, uncongenial as it was to so serious a musician, proved nevertheless a source of valuable experience. After a tour round the world with an operatic company, Bantock settled down in London once more, and in the winter of 1896 set himself up as one of the first champions of modern English music by giving a concert consisting entirely of works by composers of the younger generation: a daring experiment at that time. In 1897 the young musician was appointed musical director of the Tower at New Brighton, where he was obliged to content himself with a military band for the first year, but he soon succeeded in establishing a full orchestra, which under his guidance gave admirable performances of classical and modern works.

In February, 1900, Granville Bantock was called upon to conduct a concert of British music at Antwerp, where some of his own orchestral works were heard for the first time out of England, and in the autumn of the same year he was appointed Principal of the School of Music attached to the Birmingham and Midland Institute, a position which he still holds and which has given him many opportunities of stimulating greater musical activities in that im-

portant centre.

If the work of Granville Bantock is to be appreciated at its true value, it must not be forgotten that he was one of the earliest pioneers of contemporary British music, which but for his early and passionate contest on behalf of artistic freedom, might possibly have taken a very different turn. When, in the early nineties, he began to devote himself seriously to composition, England as a productive musical country was only just emerging very timidly from the slough of a neo-classicism which had not even the redeeming feature of any strikingly powerful representatives. Musicians in those days were still considered as sufficiently abreast with the times if they had succeeded in freeing themselves from the sway of Mendelssohn and come, by turn of the wheel, under the no less destructive dominion of It was Bantock who dared to turn his Brahms. back upon all such influences which, healthy as they might have been in moderation, he justly resented as an intolerable fetter to an artist's individual expression. Partly from a feeling that he had things to say which had never been said before, and partly perhaps from an obstinate love of personal liberty, the young composer, conscious of a greater latent power than he was as yet able to give utterance to. set out to shock academic respectability by embarking on cyclic works of unrealizable dimensions, such as the projected twenty-four symphonic poems on Southey's "Curse of Kehama" and the ten parts of the symphony-oratorio, "Christus." Each set was barely begun, when Bantock's own sense of balance, aided no doubt by a sense of humour, taught him to recognise the impossible nature of his plans. He abandoned them without regret, feeling neither humiliated nor defeated, for there soon followed similar cyclic works which still showed all the composer's breadth of vision although their magnitude was now reduced to practicable proportions. These works are the nine Sappho songs for contralto

and orchestra (with an orchestral prelude), the six sets of "Songs of the East" for voice and piano (or orchestra) and, above all, the monumental setting for solo voices, chorus and orchestra of the quatrains of Omar Khavvám. This last work more than any other established Bantock's fame as a composer. He had dared to write a choral work of the dimensions of an oratorio which was not based on a religious subject, an undertaking that was fraught with the gravest dangers at a time when choral societies still clung devotedly to a school created by the "Messiah" and "Elijah." Bantock, in replacing a grey, unimaginative Western form of art by a glowing and picturesque Eastern one, now made it definitely clear in what directions his aims and his predilections lay. It has sometimes been suspected that his leaning towards Oriental subjects was not altogether sincere; but those who know the peculiar qualities and defects of his music are aware that this addiction is a very natural consequence of his artistic outlook. Bantock's work, like that of the Eastern poets, is rich in imagery; everything is expressed by concrete symbols rather than by abstract ideas, and even the works of a philosophical or psychological nature, such as "Vanity of Vanities," "The Pierrot of the Minute," or "Fifine at the Fair" belong to an essentially pictorial type of Absolute music has never attracted Bantock the early "Helena Variations" for orchestra are the only example of importance approaching it—and even the Sonata for viola and piano has a picturesque

It is here that we come upon the second of Bantock's most abundant sources of inspiration: the folklore of Scotland. This has taken possession of him at a comparatively late stage of his career, but it has made so overwhelming an appeal to him as almost to supplant his Oriental proclivities. The latter, however, have once more shown themselves in the "Songs from the Chinese Poets," where they are ripened into a more mellow and less imitatively Eastern mode of expression. The two most important examples of Bantock's partiality to Scottish subjects are the beautiful "Hebridean Symphony" and the elemental Hebridean Sea Poem, "The

Sea-Reivers: " but two violoncello pieces on a large scale, the "Celtic Poem" and the "Pibroch," are

also noteworthy.

A glance at Granville Bantock's whole output shows that he has by no means been obsessed by Oriental and Northern conceptions to the exclusion of everything else; he has in fact chosen other subiects from the Bible and from Greek tragedy, from Sappho and Dante, from Shelley and Browning, from Swinburne and Ernest Dowson, while the war has inspired him in his fine setting of I. C. Squire's poem, "The March."

Bantock has often been called upon to satisfy the demands of Competition Festivals for new choral works; but instead of turning out the accepted commonplaces, he took the fullest advantage of such opportunities by setting fine poetry to music that presented many new problems to choral societies and thus did wonders in widening their scope and perfecting the technique of choral singing in England. But the composer too profited by these experiments, which in due time led to the vast unaccompanied choral works on Swinburne's "Atalanta in Calydon" and the "Vanity of Vanities" of Ecclesiastes.

Of Bantock's more recent work a characteristic portion is a group of Browning Songs, mostly from Dramatic Lyrics." With some aspects of Browning he is in strong sympathy—a sympathy one outcome of which was the earlier song-cycle, "Ferishtah's Fancies," and another the orchestral tonepoem "Fifine at the Fair." In the present series there is a very real psychological insight and a

touching, often mystical beauty.

Two fine groups consist of settings of poems by Bantock's friend, the Midland poet Alfred Hayes: nature poems with a flavour of Greek myth in one of the sets. "Pagan Chants" is a cycle of four songs for tenor and orchestra, showing very clearly their genesis in the mind of the author of "Pan in Arcady." The motto, Faune, nympharum fugientum amator! emphasizes this. The cycle opens with a short prelude and then follows the first number, "The dead Dryad," the words being taken (as is the case with the whole set) from Wilfrid Thorley's "Confessional." The succeeding numbers are "The



Crippled Faun," "The Hind in Ambush" and "The Faun Despondent." The workmanship recalls similar scenes in Bantock's second great work for chorus and orchestra, "The Great God Pan," and

is quite in his late manner.

A third large choral work, which forms a kind of counterpart to "Omar Khayyam," is "The Song of Songs, the first part of which will be produced at the Gloucester Festival in the autumn of 1922 / It is written for solo voices, chorus and orchestra and is laid out in five scenes or episodes, the words being of course taken from the Old Testament As in the case of "Omar Khayyam," Bantock has evolved a dramatic version, allotting various portions of the text to special characters. These are: The Shulamite and her two attendants; The Shepherd, her real lover; The King, who is trying to win her; a Watchman; and three Maidens. There are subordinate parts for Priests, Soldiers, Villagers, Dancers, &c. Four of the five scenes take place in the king's palace, and the fifth among the vineyards, after the Shulamite has been released by the king and is re-united with her shepherd-lover. Between the dramatic episodes a mystic choir (unseen) is heard singing four Psalms. There are dances, a triumphal procession, a bridal procession, and all the colour and glitter of an oriental world. The interpretation sometimes given to the sensuous imagery of the poem seems to the lay mind more than a little strained, but it contains some of the most beautiful passages in literature, and passages which appeal strongly to Bantock, whose latest work is a striking, richly coloured and very typical specimen of his genius.

In Granville Bantock musical history of the early part of the twentieth century possesses a generous, picturesque and highly individual personality, whose name is known and honoured far beyond the con-

fines of his own country

I have

RANVILLE BANTOCK est né à Londres le 7 aout 1869. Il fut élevé dans l'intention d'entrer dans l'administration des Indes. mais son talent et son goût pour la musique l'éloignèrent bientôt de cette carrière. quelques leçons au Trinity College, il entra à l'Académie Royale de Musique en 1889 et y obtint la bourse Macfarren à la fin du premier trimestre. Alors qu'il y était encore élève, plusieurs de ses œuvres furent exécutées aux concerts de la Royal Academy, entre autres une version de concert de Caedmar, opéra en un acte, qui fut représenté au théatre Olympic en 1892. Mais avant que son nom ne devint celui d'un des plus audacieux compositeurs anglais de cette époque, une période de trois ans (1893-1896) s'écoula qui le vit se consacrer à d'autres domaines musicaux. Bantock devint à ce moment le rédacteur-en-chef de la "New Quarterly Musical Review " et parcourut la province en qualité de chef d'orchestre d'une compagnie d'opérettes, tâche qui, bien que peu en rapport avec son goût pour la musique sérieuse, lui procura du moins d'utiles expériences. Après un tour du monde accompli avec une troupe d'opéra, Bantock s'établit de nouveau à Londres, et, dans l'hiver de 1896, s'affirma l'un des premiers champions de la musique Anglaise moderne en donnant un concert entièrement composé d'œuvres de musiciens de la jeune génération, entreprise audacieuse à cette époque. En 1897 le jeune compositeur fut nommé directeur musical de la Tower à New Brighton où il dût, pendant la première année, se contenter d'un orchestre militaire. Mais il réussit bientot à organiser un orchestre complet qui, sous sa direction, donna de remarquables exécutions d'œuvres classiques et modernes.

En février 1900, Granville Bantock fut appelé à conduire un concert de musique anglaise à Anvers, où l'on entendit, pour la première fois hors d'Angleterre, quelques unes de ses œuvres, et à l'automne de cette même année, il fut nommé directeur de l'Ecole de Musique du Birmingham and Midland Institute, position qu'il occupe encore et qui lui a donné de nombreuses occasions de stimuler une plus vive activité musicale dans ce centre important.

Pour apprécier l'œuvre de Granville Bantock à sa juste valeur, il ne faut pas oublier qu'il a été l'un des premiers pionniers de la musique anglaise contemporaine qui, sans son activité passionnée en faveur de la liberté artistique, aurait pris peut-être un tout autre tour. Quand, vers 1890, il commença à se consacrer vraiment à la composition, l'Angleterre, en tant que pays musical producteur, ne faisait que bien timidement émerger d'un néo-classicisme qui n'avait pas même, pour se racheter, quelques représentants véritablement personnels. Les musiciens de cette époque se considéraient comme suffisamment avancés si, aprés s'être délivrés de l'emprise de Mendelssohn, ils se plaçaient sous la domination non moins destructrice de Brahms. C'est Bantock qui échappa délibérément à ces influences qui, pour salutaires qu'elles pouvaient être à condition qu'elles s'exerçassent modérément, devenaient une véritable entrave à l'expression individuelle des jeunes artistes d'alors. D'une part, à cause du sentiment qu'il avait de pouvoir exprimer des choses qu'on n'avait pas dites avant lui, et d'autre part, peut-être, par suite d'un amour obstiné pour la liberté personnelle, le jeune compositeur, ayant conscience d'un pouvoir latent plus grand que celui auguel il avait jusqu'alors pu donner cours, entreprit de s'insurger contre la "respectability" académique en entreprenant des œuvres cycliques de dimensions irréalisables, telles que le projet de vingt-quatre poèmes symphoniques sur la "Malédiction de Kehma" de Southey et les dix parties d'un oratorio symphoni-"Jésus-Christ." L'une et l'autre de ces œuvres furent à peine commencées, car le sens des proportions que possède Bantock, en même temps que son "sense of humour," lui firent bientôt reconnaître l'impossibilité de semblables desseins. Il les abandonna sans regret, n'en éprouvant ni humiliation ni découragement, car ils furent suivis d'œuvres cycliques assez semblables et qui témoignent de la largeur de vision de leur auteur, encore que leur étendue fut réduite à des proportions plus praticables. Ces œuvres furent les Neuf poèmes de Sapho pour contralto et orchestre (avec un prélude symphonique), les six recueils de "Chansons d'Orient "pour voix et piano (ou orchestre) et, surtout,

la monumentale illustration musicale pour solos, chœur et orchestre, des quatrains d'Omar Khayyam. Cette dernière œuvre, plus que toute autre, a contribué à établir la réputation de Granville Bantock comme compositeur. Il avait osé écrire une œuvre chorale d'une dimension d'oratorio, mais sans prendre pour base un sujet religieux, et cette entreprise pouvait rencontrer les plus graves dangers à une époque où les sociétés chorales étaient dévotement attachées à une école issue du Messie et d'Elie. Bantock, en remplaçant une forme d'art occidentale, grise et dénuée d'imagination, par une autre colorée du pittoresque oriental, montrait clairement vers quel but il tendait et de quel côté se trouvaient ses prédilections. On a mis quelquefois en doute la sincérité de son penchant aux sujets orientaux : mais ceux qui connaissent les qualités particulières et les défauts de sa musique savent parfaitement que cette inclination est la conséquence naturelle de ses vues artistiques. L'œuvre de Bantock, de même que celle des poètes orientaux, est riche d'images: tout s'y exprime à l'aide de symboles concrets bien plutôt que par des idées abstraites, et même des œuvres de nature philosophique ou psychologique, comme Vanité des Vanités, le Pierrot de la Minute ou Fifine at the Fair appartiennent à un type d'art essentiellement pictural. La musique pure n'a jamais attiré Bantock, les Helena Variations pour orchestre, œuvre de ses débuts, sont le seul exemple important qu'on puisse rencontrer dans sa carrière, et la Sonate pour alto et piano, elle même, a une base pittoresque.

Ici l'on touche la seconde des plus abondantes sources d'inspiration de Bantock, la chanson populaire écossaise. Elle a pris possession de lui à un moment relativement tardif de sa carrière, mais elle a exercé une telle attraction sur son esprit qu'elle y a presque supplanté ses inclinations orientales. Celles-ci sesont toutefois laissées voir dans les Mélodies d'après des Poètes Chinois où elles ont pris un aspect plus mûr et une forme d'expression moins imitative. Les deux exemples les plus importants de la sympathie de Bantock pour les sujets écossais sont la belle Symphonie des Hébrides, et le poème maritime des Hébrides, the Sea Reivers: mais il faut

signaler aussi deux pièces importantes pour le violon-

celle, le Poème celtique et le Pibroch.

Si l'on considère l'ensemble de l'œuvre de Granville Bantock, on voit qu'il n'a nullement été obsédé par des conceptions orientales ou nordiques à l'exclusion de toute autre: il a, en effet, choisi d'autres sujets dans la Bible, dans la tragédie grecque, dans Sappho et Dante, dans Shelley et Browning, dans Swinburne et Ernest Dowson, tandis que la guerre l'a inspiré de mettre en musique un poème

de J. C. Squire, The March.

On a souvent fait appel à Bantock pour écrire de nouvelles œuvres chorales à l'intention des Festivals-concours: mais au lieu de se contenter des lieux communs habituels, il a profité de ces circonstances pour mettre en musique de beaux poèmes tout en donnant à résoudre de nouveaux problèmes aux sociétés chorales qui y trouvèrent l'occasion d'élargir leurs ressources et de perfectionner leur technique. Le compositeur, de son côté, tirait profit de ces tentatives en écrivant de grandes œuvres chorales sans accompagnement, d'après l' Atalante à Calydon de Swinburne et le Vanité des Vanités de l' Ecclésiaste.

Parmi les œuvres les plus récentes de Bantock une part caractéristique est le groupe des Mélodies d'après Browning, la plupart inspirées des Poèmes dramatiques. Le compositeur est en complète sympathie avec certains aspects de Browning, il l'a montré de bonne heure dans son recueil Ferishtah's Fancies aussi bien que dans le poème symphonique Fifine at the Fair. On rencontre dans le groupe le plus récent une très profonde pénétration psychologique et une beauté touchante, parfois colorée de mysticisme.

Deux des plus beaux recueils de Bantock sont ceux où il a mis en musique des poèmes de son ami le poète du Midland: Alfred Hayes: poèmes de nature que vient parfumer, dans un recueil, la mythologie grecque, Chants Païens est une suite de quatre mélodies pour ténor et orchestre dont la genèse se montre nettement dans l'esprit de l'auteur de Pan en Arcadie. L'épigraphe Faune, nympharum fugientum amator l'explique assez. Ce cycle débute par un court Prélude précèdant Dryade Morte dont le

poème est emprunté, ainsi que les suivants, au Confessional de Wilfrid Thorley. Le style de ce recueil rappelle les scènes analogues de la seconde grande œuvre de Bantock pour choeur et orchestre, Le Grand Pan, et est le témoignage de sa dernière manière.

Une troisième œuvre chorale importante, qui forme une sorte de contrepartie à Omar Khayyam est Le Cantique des Cantiques dont la première partie sera exécutée au Festival de Gloucester dans l'automne de 1922. C'est une œuvre écrite pour soli, chœur et orchestre, en cinq scènes ou épisodes et dont les paroles sont empruntées, cela va sans dire, à l'Ancien Testament. De même que dans Omar Khayyam, Granville Bantock a, ici, attribué certaines parties du texte à des personnages spéciaux. Ce sont: la Sulamite et ses deux suivantes: le Berger. son amoureux : le Roi qui essaie de la conquérir : un Veilleur: et trois Servantes: avec des rôles de comparses, prêtres, soldats, paysans, danseurs, etc. Quatre des cinq scènes se passent dans le palais du Roi et la cinquième parmi les vignes après que le Roi a laissé partir la Sulamite et qu'elle est réunie au berger qui l'aime. Entre les épisodes dramatiques, un chœur mystique invisible se fait entendre et chante quatre Psaumes. Il y a des danses, une procession triomphale, un cortège de noces et toute la couleur et l'éclat du monde oriental. L'interprétation donnée à l'imagerie sensuelle du poème peut paraître parfois un peu forcée, mais elle contient quelques uns des plus beaux passages qui soient dans la littérature de tous les temps, et des passages précisément de nature à inspirer Bantock, dont cette dernière œuvre affirme l'art robuste, coloré et personnel.

En Granville Bantock l'histoire musicale de la première partie de ce siècle compte une personnalité réelle, généreuse, et pittoresque, dont le nom est connu et honoré au delà même des bornes de son

propre pays.



From "The Island of Pines."



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Sonata 10 0							
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Celtic Poem (The Land of the Ever-Young)40Hamabdil, A Hebrew Melody20Pibroch, A Highland Lament26							
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Hamabdil, Hebrew Melody for Violoncello and Orchestra.							
Material on Hire—Matérial en Location The March, Song for Medium Voice and Orchestra.							
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1. The Old Fisherman of the Mists and Waters (Le							
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 Sáki! Dye the Cup's Rim Deeper

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9. Cherries
10. Plot Culture 10.

13. Epilogue, Oh love, no love

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Shah Abbas

1. Hymn to Aphrodite
2. "I loved thee once,
Athis, long ago" 3. Evening Song,

Evening, thou bringest all" 4. "Stand face to face, friend

"The Moon has set"
"Peer of Gods he seems"

"In a dream I spake"
Bridal Song, "O fair, O lovely!" Muse of the golden throne

Song of the Genie

Songs of Arabia

The Meeting 3.

In the Desert The Nightingale's Song

5. The Chieftain's Battle Song6. The Return

Lament

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GRANVILLE BANTOCK

SONGS

C	c Cl.	
	gs of China	
1.	Song of the Bells	
2.	Forsaken	
Song	gs of Egypt	
1.	Invocation to the	Nile
2.	In the Garden	
0	C H 1.	

3. Love Song 4. In the Palace 5. A Lullaby 6. War Song

1. Invocation to the Nile | 3. The Unutterable 2. In the Garden 4. Bridal Song Songs of India

5. Lament of Isis6. Festal Song

The Nautch Girl
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O Mistress Mine (Shakespeare) (S.A.T.B.)

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Scotland yet (H. S. Riddell) (S.A.T.B.)

Stranger, thou art standing now (Sophocles) (T.T.B.B.)

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1	In a Year	•••	Robert	Browning	B to F or D to Ab			
2	The Guardian A	ngel	,,	"	B to F or D to Ab			
3	My Star	•••	,,	,,	C# to E or E to G			
4	A Woman's Last	t Wo	ord "	,,	Bb to F# or C# to A			
5	Home Thoughts	•••	,,	,,	A to F# or C to A			
7	Now	•••	,,	,,	A to E or C to G			
8	Summum Bonu	m	,,	,,	A to F or C to Ab			
9	A Pearl, a Girl	•••	,,	**	C to F or Eb to Ab			
13	The Moon Maide	en's						
	Song			Dowson	D to E or F# to G#			
(From "The Pierrot of the Minute")								
15	By the Fireside	•••	Robert	Browning	A to E or C to G			
20	Life in a Love	•••	,,	,,	Ab to E or Cb to G			
21	Wanting is-Wh	at?	,,	,,	G to F or C to Bb			
22	Never the time a	nd						
	the place	•••	,,	,,	A to F or C to Ab			
23	Pippa Passes	•••	,,	,,	D to G or F to Bb			
			-1					

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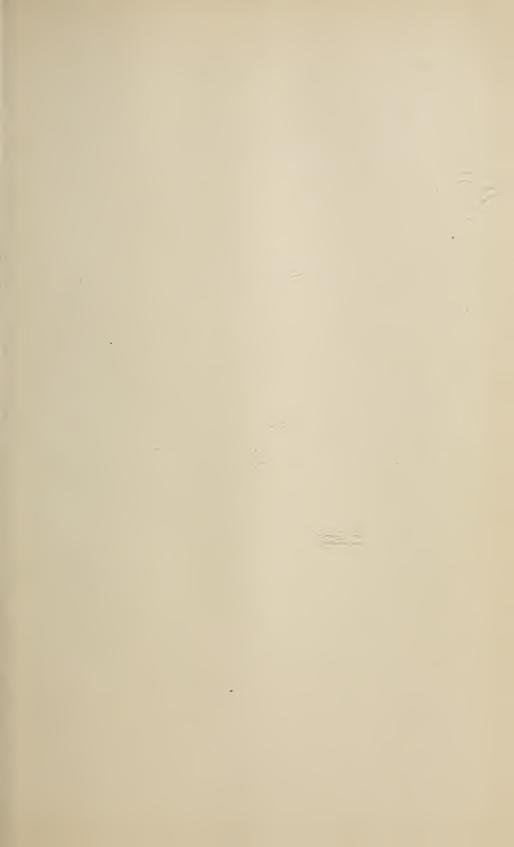
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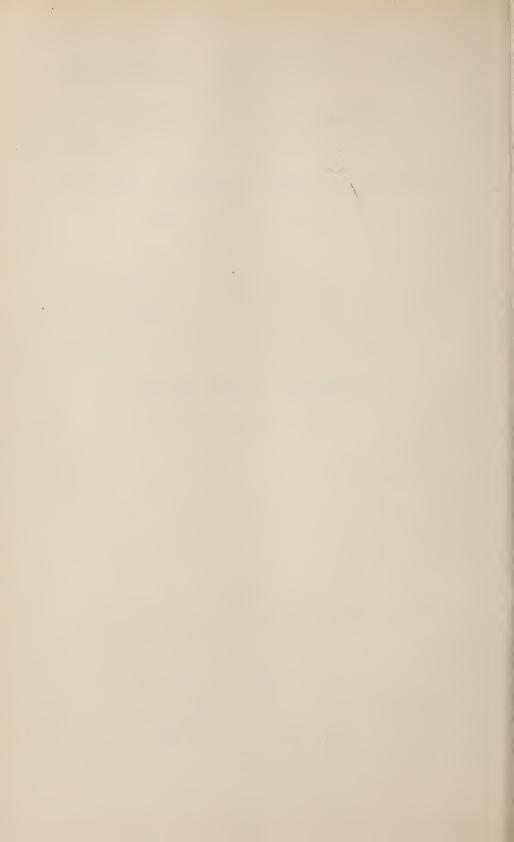
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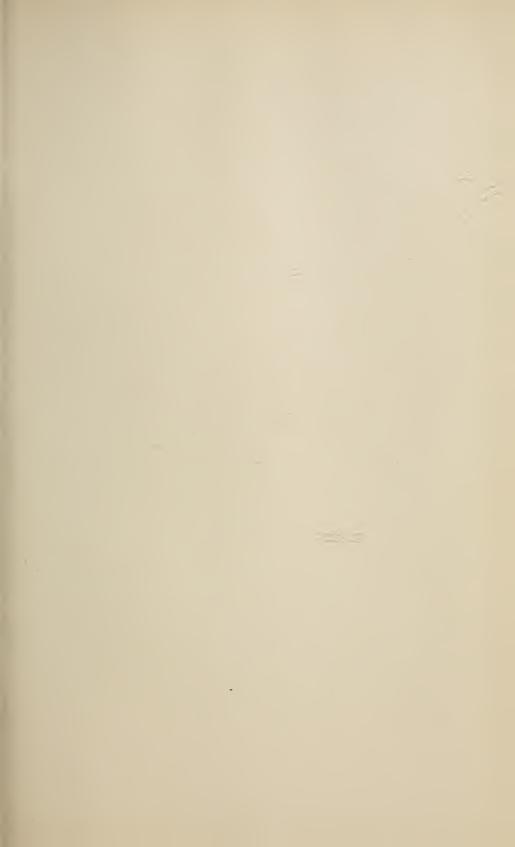
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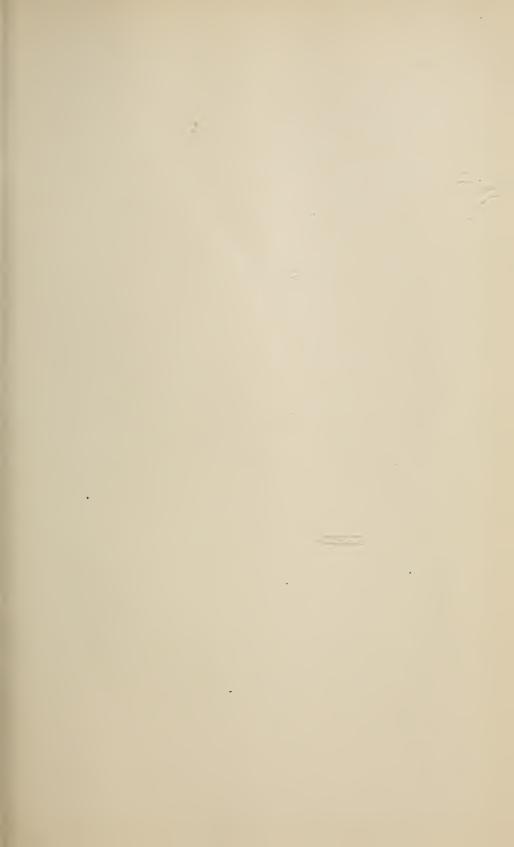
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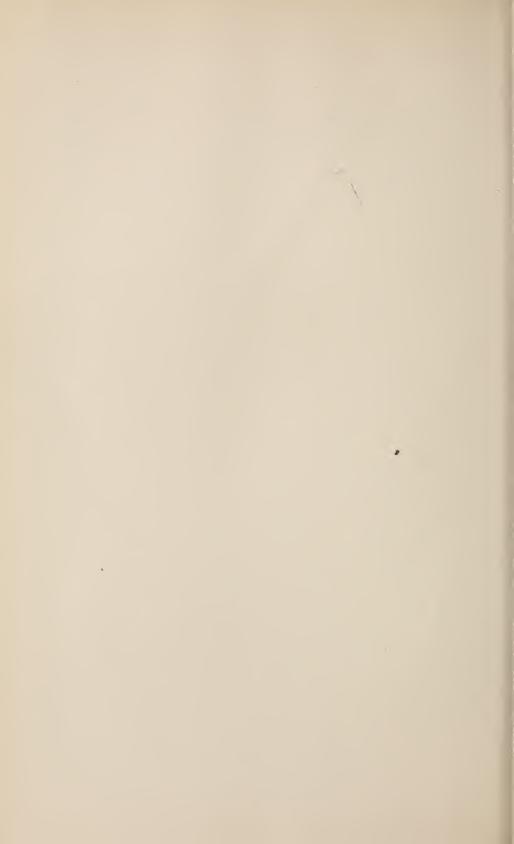






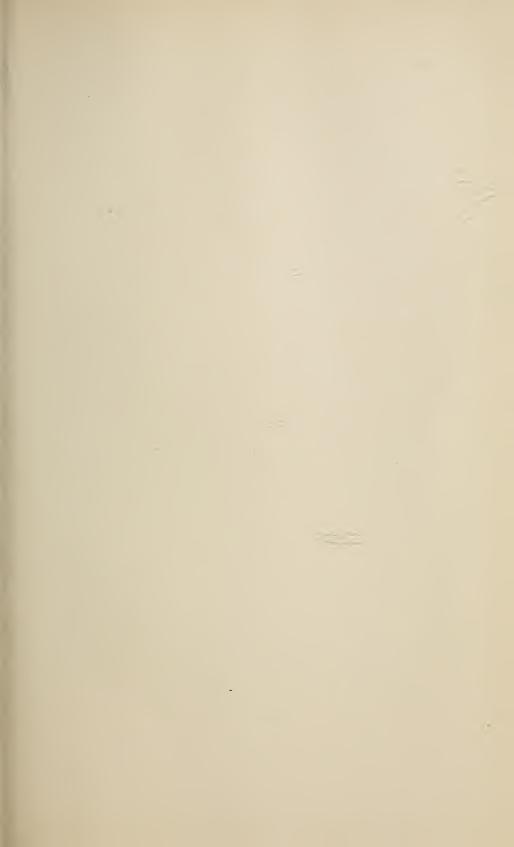












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